



**CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE FOR
SCOTLAND'S SCHOOLS**

NEWSLETTER

**AUTUMN/WINTER
2020-21**

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Please send any submissions to

ciss-info@strath.ac.uk



EDITORIAL

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I'm honoured to write this editorial to mark my work at CISS. Firstly, I hope all of you, your family, friends and colleagues are safe and well in such challenging times. I also want to express my sympathy and understanding to colleagues whose family members are far away from them right now, or if you have lost loved ones.

During lockdown, we had to slow down the pace of work and life and had the time to reflect. 20 years ago, I would never have thought I'd be living outside of China and certainly not living in Scotland and establishing my family here. However, I have now been in Scotland for 17 years and am proud of where I have chosen to live and work. It is such a friendly and multicultural environment and fits in so well with what I'm doing. I never thought I would leave the CISS team but life always surprises us, doesn't it? There is one thing that remains unchanged for me and that is to respect and be grateful for the incredible experience I've had.

I have worked for ten amazing years at CISS and still clearly remember the launch of the Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools. I was pregnant with my daughter when that happened! I'll never forget the jokes and laughs with colleagues in the office and the incredible trips to China. It has been one of the most unforgettable experiences of my career and I am forever thankful for this opportunity. Mark Twain said, "Find a job you enjoy doing, and you'll never have to work a day in your life".

I am very lucky to have worked in my much-loved job with SQA to design and develop the national qualifications for Chinese languages; to promote my mother tongue and culture across Scotland and to work from the establishment of the Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools. Having witnessed the growth of Confucius classrooms in Scotland from zero to 46; the number of youngsters learning Mandarin from a few to thousands; the network of locally trained Chinese teachers from zero to over 40; and Chinese exchange teachers from zero to nearly 60 each year, what I have learned is that quantity isn't always the measure of success but watching the importance of learning Chinese language and culture grow in my career has been breath-taking. There are so many people who have worked alongside me and believed in me that I would like to thank. I am only a wee drop in the ocean in helping the learning and teaching of Chinese progress, but without all of you, I wouldn't have achieved any of this.



I am indeed feeling sad to leave CISS and what a wonderful team I've had to support me along the way, with countless lovely and kind people in universities, schools, local authorities, communities, and national organisations with so many exciting and rewarding projects. I'm fortunate to have made so many friends throughout my work during my 10 years at CISS and this friendship will continue forever.

My new role at the University will continue to connect the two countries and I will continue to thrive, onwards and upwards! I will miss you all and remember the journey we've had together.

Fan Lin
Depute Director of CISS

UPDATES FROM CISS

Pupil Immersion

Since 2011 we have been running an annual pupil immersion course to Beijing and Tianjin each July. Nearly 1000 young people across Scotland have had the opportunity to travel to China with CISS to learn about its unique language and culture. We were extremely disappointed that the trip could not go ahead this year because of Covid-19. Unfortunately, the trip will

not go ahead in 2021 for the same reason. We know this will be a huge disappointment to many young people who will have been looking forward to this opportunity for years. However, all being well, the trip will resume in the summer of 2022. Please keep an eye out for communications with more details.



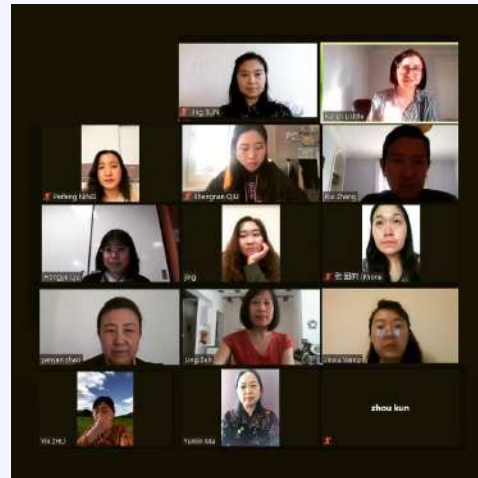
Scholarship

Since its inception in 2012, the CISS scholarship has offered over 100 school leavers the chance to spend an immersive year in Tianjin learning Mandarin. It was with a very heavy heart that we had to announce the cancellation of the 2021-2022 scholarship. Although we cannot offer the usual opportunity to young people across Scotland next year, TMEC has assured us that they intend to continue this project in session 2022/23 so this does not signal the end of the CISS scholarship. You can read about current and former scholars here:

[HTTPS://WWW.STRATH.AC.UK/HUMANITIES/CONFUCIUSINSTITUTEFORSCOTLANDSCHOOLS/SCHOLARSHIP/](https://www.strath.ac.uk/humanities/confuciusinstituteforScotlandSchools/scholarship/)

Chinese Exchange Teachers

This year we have a reduced number of Chinese Exchange Teachers (CETs) working across our hub schools. Professional Development Officer Karen Liddle has developed a new and exciting programme of CLPL for the group. We are working closely with TMEC to secure new exchange teachers for 2021-2022 and will be meeting some of them online in early December. Please keep an eye out for individual updates about CETs for your hub for session 2021-2022.



Virtual Exchange Teacher Project

Our virtual exchange teacher programme launched at the end of September 2020. The programme is run in conjunction with the eSgoil online learning organisation and in partnership with South West Jiao Tong University, Chengdu, China. The pilot programme consists of a 10 week upper Primary or Secondary BGE course. We have 10 Confucius Hubs taking part and amidst the technical glitches that inevitably come with a live online class(!) we're delighted to see Scottish pupils able to connect with a native Mandarin speaking teacher on the other side of the world. We are planning to launch the next level of the programme in the spring of 2021.



Cultural Events

We are currently working with a range of partners to design a host of online activities and workshops for the new year. Workshops will be delivered online with a focus on Chinese culture and wellbeing. Details and dates will be advertised to schools soon.

CONFUCIUS CLASSROOM HUBS

East Renfrewshire

Cross Arthurlie Primary School

Nǐ hǎo from East Renfrewshire!

The challenges of 2020 have not held us back as Mandarin continues to flourish here at Cross Arthurlie's Confucius Hub!

In January, the whole school came together to mark the Year of the Rat. We combined our Mandarin Hub with our UNICEF Global Goals focus of helping to tackle pollution. With the Rat being celebrated for being quick thinking and innovative, learners were challenged to write a story about a rat whose environment is damaged by plastic. The enthusiasm towards this competition was astounding! Due to the high numbers of entries, a winner was selected from every year group. The winners won a creative Chinese stationary pack to continue to inspire their cross-cultural Literacy talents.



Mandarin lessons continued online for home learning throughout Lockdown.

Despite lockdown, Mandarin culture and language lessons continued online. This provided a unique opportunity for siblings and families to learn together. The inclusive nature of the lessons was highly successful with many families submitting videos and positive feedback of their learning at home.

Upon returning to school in August, we have been very lucky to have Chinese Exchange Teacher Shengnan Qiu. With health and safety measures in place, Primary 5, 6 and 7 have benefitted greatly from superb culture and language lessons. We are truly grateful for this unique experience to help our pupils settle back into their education.

Xièxiè from Cross Arthurlie Primary Confucius Hub!



In-class teaching taking place safely in school with Chinese Exchange Teacher Shengnan Qiu.





St Ninian's High School

This year the Mid-Autumn festival and Chinese National Day fell on the same day: October 1st. These festivals are both celebrated by spending time with family and friends and eating traditional Chinese food.

Although our school would usually put on a large event and have live performances, this year as a class we celebrated this festival by performing a traditional Chinese song, 'The Moon Represents My Heart' in a group. Pupils from all year groups who study Mandarin in school filmed their own performance and this was included in a video, which our teacher Mrs Zhou compiled of performances from previous years. This brought back many happy memories! It included traditional singing and dancing performances and even clips of traditional Chinese character painting from previous Mid-Autumn Festival celebrations. The performance made us come together as a class and reflect on the importance of this special festival.





This formed part of our Chinese culture studies, which help our lessons, not only with exam preparation but also gaining a deeper understanding of China. Pupils say these cultural lessons are extremely important in helping broaden their understanding, as well as connecting with the language on a deeper level.

Highland

Grantown Grammar School

At Grantown we have set up an outdoor Mandarin learning area next to the languages department with benches and space to practise Martial Arts, shuttlecock and skipping.



Chinese Exchange Teacher Jinxiu Wang has spent time this term teaching pupils in the secondary and primaries about Mid Autumn Festival and all pupils have enjoyed learning some Martial Arts outside.



Moray

Forres Academy

At Forres Academy two of our senior pupils are delighted to be able to continue their learning of Mandarin by enrolling in the eSgoil Mandarin National 5 course.

Libby Killeen and Iona Duff explain:

“Last year we took a Mandarin DYW (developing the young workforce) class that introduced us to both the language and Chinese culture. We found it fun and different to anything we had done before. The class was taught by Ms Fang, a Chinese Exchange Teacher who came to our class every fortnight. She was a great teacher who made sure the lessons were engaging as well as easy to follow. Later on in the year we were given the opportunity to sign up for Mandarin as a National 5 course, which we both happily accepted. So far, the course has been very interesting but also intense and challenging, however all the hard work is worth it. We have classes three times a week and also attend a study support session after school on a Thursday, these are all done online through eSgoil. We were also extremely lucky to be offered the chance to go on a two-week trip to Beijing and Tianjin in China. Unfortunately, this was postponed due to the current circumstances with COVID-19. However, we are keeping our fingers crossed for future trips.”



Libby adds:

“During lockdown I also took part in some online classes for Mandarin through eSgoil. These were extremely beneficial to me as they gave me an overview to the course I would be studying and helped me to develop key skills in order to do well. We hope to continue to improve our Mandarin even after we have finished the course.

Women xi huan zhong wen!! 我们喜欢中文!

North Ayrshire

The Isle Of Arran Cluster have been lucky enough to have a Chinese Exchange Teacher for almost two years, and within that time, seven of our teaching staff completed the Open University course for Beginner’s Mandarin. This commitment by our staff, and the wonderful input from Dong Lu really accelerated our Mandarin journey. Our second year of Miss Dong involved her working with our Development Group who, knowing that the time the primaries had would diminish, were creating an Inter-disciplinary learning approach to the teaching of the language.

Our 1+2 Co-ordinator within North Ayrshire and PDO Meryl James from CISS/SCILT were incredibly supportive during the development of the IDL. Obviously, Covid-19 has had an impact on this; two of our primaries were piloting the IDL when Lockdown started. Dong Lu continued to support in a virtual way and the Working Party completed its work at a physical distance!

Our primaries are in a strong position where all of the primary seven across the island have had sufficient input to have covered second level in Mandarin as their L3; we are still consolidating this with daily routines and occasional input, such as European Day of Languages. Our High School was due to have more Mandarin classes for BGE students but that has had to be re-thought. They will have a CISS Virtual Teacher for 10 weeks from January until March. We are hoping to get another teacher next session to teach the BGE students third level and to support the primaries when some of the schools will try our IDL approach at second level.

Brodict Primary School



Our P6/7 class are very excited as they have won a prize for their European Day of Language submission, pictured here. They painted stones in both French and Mandarin, with the translation on the back, relating to family members. Stones were then taken to a local care home garden, to be shared with the residents.

Chinese New Year Celebrations



More photos from Ayrshire





Perth and Kinross

Kinross High School



Chinese Brush Painting

Our second-year Chinese Exchange Teacher, Hongye Lyu taught all of our S1 pupils how to paint in the traditional Chinese way. The pupils also learned how to say the colours in Mandarin. This was part of the Kinross High School Languages Week celebrations.



Virtual Exchange Teachers

The PKC hub is very grateful to be able to take part in the Virtual Exchange Teacher programme to ensure continued learning in our more rural primary schools after Miss Su returned to China. All of our P5-7 classes now have a weekly lesson live from China. The photos are from Mrs McMartin's P6/7 class at Milnathort primary school.



West Lothian

Armadale Primary School is one of many Confucius Classroom Hubs which radiates out into a local authority through cultural activities; sharing ideas with other cluster schools to help stimulate the learning and teaching of Chinese language and culture. Armadale Primary School incorporated into its curriculum some ideas about Scotland to send to their twinned school, Heping Central Primary School in Tianjin, China. This included a small red bag containing 8 items, representing different parts of Scottish culture, selected and packed by pupils of Armadale Primary.

The items were:

- S – Saltire Badge
- C – Castle picture
- O - Oats
- T- Tartan
- L – Lion Rampant Sticker
- A – Armadale Primary Wrist Band
- N – Nessie Keyring
- D- Highland Dancer Picture

Also, in each bag the children added jigsaw pieces to be put together by the pupils of Heping Central Primary School to show Scotland's landscapes. Armadale Primary is also sending two books of Selected Poems by Robert Burns translated into Chinese, 3 books about The McCoo's inspired by Steven Brown, art work that was done by the pupils during our Steven Brown inspired art week and a montage of pictures which show a representation of Armadale Primary School.



The project was featured in the West Lothian Courier

SPECIALIST HUBS

Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS)

China/Scotland Project

This is a comparison project of China and Scotland, which looks at the similarities and differences between the habitats and animals of each country. The package includes habitat maps, a workbook, an online book and Mandarin sound files along with an accompanying virtual session. Aimed at upper primary but could be used in lower secondary.

The RZSS Beyond the Panda programme partnered with JASS to create this pack. Learn about animals from both China and Scotland, then choose a Scottish animal to investigate, which fulfils part of the 'Me and My World' section. This can further involve actions to help save endangered animals, for example: bird feeders, bug hotels, raising money for RZSS projects in the wild. The 'Beyond the Panda' education programme has a number of free resources linking science and the Mandarin language and some are linked to virtual sessions. Find out more at beyondthepanda.org.uk

Contact

srobb@rzss.org.uk

BEYONDTHEPANDA.ORG.UK



Scottish Opera

The Adventures of Tiny Chef

An animated musical story for Primary 3 & 4 pupils

Music;	Karen MacIver
Words;	Ross Stenhouse
Illustrations;	Iain Piercy
Motion Graphics;	Viola Madau
Performers:	Andrew McTaggart & Shannon Stevenson

In Autumn 2019, our team of artists visited four primary schools; Carron, Culross, Armadale and Jordanhill, and worked with over 200 pupils aged 6 to 11 years, on a series of creative workshops to help develop an original story that combined simple Chinese cuisine, food shopping and preparation with a magical tale set in a marvellous, moveable restaurant known as The Sugélàn Dragon.

This was a pupil led creative process throughout; the children's musical and narrative ideas were skilfully woven into a musical score by the composer and librettist and their beautiful drawings feature as background images throughout the 'book'.

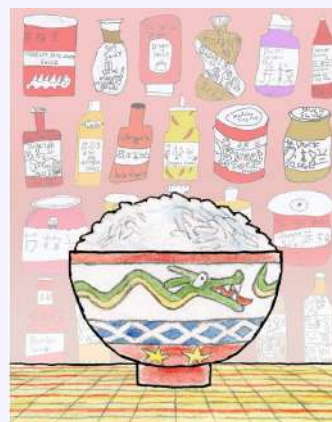
**mi-fan
means
rice**

Over a series of short animated sequences, each with its own song, your pupils can follow a busy day in the restaurant until Sugélàn Dragon closes its doors and flies off to its next destination.

Don't wait for a special invitation to the world's most magical restaurant! The Adventures of Tiny Chef will be available to download from [Scottish Opera's website](http://www.scottishopera.org.uk) from Friday 19th November 2020.

Follow the link from the main page via JOIN IN section and select The Adventures of Tiny Chef from the drop down menu.

WWW.SCOTTISHOPERA.ORG.UK



CHINESE EXCHANGE TEACHER CATCH-UP

Minrong Zhang, CISS Chinese Exchange Teacher 2017-2019

I had a wonderful experience working at CISS from 2017 to 2019. During this time, the lovely people, the picturesque scenery, and the enthusiasm towards education made me realise I wanted to spend more time in Scotland. Therefore, I started my PGDE teacher training journey at the University of Strathclyde. It was perfect because I could visit my former colleagues from CISS on occasion. It was a special year with tears and laughter, with a massive to-do list as well as some holidays that allowed me to go back to China to attend my sister's wedding! I also participated in the Glasgow Santa Dash for the first time which was a blast.



supportive colleagues, and I love my job more day by day. And guess what, I've bagged myself a keeper and I'm now engaged ☺. What an unpredictable year!



Well, the fun times came to a halt when the Covid-19 situations began. During lockdown I spent several months stuck at home studying (and also being lazy with the cats).



Another lifechanging moment during this period was when I moved from Glasgow to Aberdeen for my probationary position at Robert Gordon's College. Again, here I have many welcoming and

CISS SCHOLARS 2020 - 2021

你好! We were asked by CISS to share our perspectives as 2020/21 scholars since this year has been unprecedented. Here's what each of us have to say...



Vartika Khanna, Aberdeen

I found out about the Tianjin Scholarship in October 2019 and decided immediately that I wanted to apply. The interview was daunting but everyone who interviewed me was really friendly and helped me feel at ease. I was at school, perfecting a parent's evening, when I found out I got offered the scholarship, to which I reacted by promptly bursting into tears. In front of everyone.

Stories about a novel 'CoronaVirus' were circulating on social media and TV a couple of months later, and I was quite concerned about it as it meant uncertainty for the next few months. When we next had a huge group meeting, I felt quite optimistic that we would all be able to travel to China together.

Then the UK went into lockdown. We thought this would be a good time to get to know each other before we left to live together in China for a year, weekly Zoom calls made that possible. Luckily everyone in the group is absolutely lovely and we all get on really well!

We found out that the scholarship got cancelled in June. To say we were gutted would be an understatement. However, we were quite relieved to find out that CISS were working on another scholarship opportunity for us, based in Chengdu.

Megan Van den Bosch, Midlothian

As of now, we are all students of Southwest Jiaotong University in Chengdu, learning Mandarin from home. Here is a typical day in the life:



We do 3 hours of classes a day on a meeting platform similar to Zoom called Voov.

Our first class is 9-9:50 which is a comprehension class where we learn new grammar and vocabulary for the topic of the day, for example a topic we have focussed on is weather. In this class we learn the vocab and grammar then we put it into practice with some exercises and quizzes.

We are then given a 10 minute break to have a rest, have something to eat, etc. From 10-10:50 we have our next class which is a reading class. In this class we are given an article which will be linked

to the topic from our first class of the day. These often give us an insight to Chinese culture or life in China. Our teacher will choose students to read the article aloud to the class and they will also ask us to answer relevant questions. Grammar and vocab we used in our comprehension class will be found in our reading and our teacher will give us a further explanation of how we use these points.

After another break, our final class starts at 11-11:50. This is our listening and speaking class. In this class we firstly revise language points from previous day's lessons as well as the new points from our first class; next we focus on pronunciation of words and tones in sentences, we will be asked to listen and repeat, then complete an HSK listening comprehension. Lastly we answer questions about the topic we have learnt that day through conversations.

After class a homework task will be posted on Panda Pal: a mini program within WeChat. This could be a reading, listening or speaking task that we complete and have marked.

Kier Skeffington, South Lanarkshire

To tell you the truth, I hate the phrase new normal. It strikes me as irritating jargon that dances around the depressing notion that it carries; the world has changed forever and anyone fortunate enough to have their health must be content with that.

I met the claims that our online Chinese class would be part of a groundbreaking new normal with a bored cynicism. The kind of bored cynicism that has a tendency to become prevalent in one's character during a national lockdown. I couldn't escape the damning comparison of a 10 month scholarship in China, versus a few Zoom calls. I slumped at the prospect of a year at home followed by a socially distant thank you and well done at the year's end, before the CISS scholarship class of 2020/21 went our separate ways. This was until classes began.



The morning sessions injected an element of structure into my day I had been craving for some time. We had a purpose. Somewhat energised by this notion, I began to ponder the fact that, all being well, this group will still graduate with high level qualifications in Mandarin, something sure to catch the eye of any relevant party in the future. I realised that we were given the opportunity, at a time when the world was in turmoil, to interact with students on the other side of the world and receive a unique educational and cultural immersion.

It's true, nobody likes settling, but as far as plan B, goes I think we've struck lucky. The world might be on hold at present, but we're investing in the future and for that, we feel obliged to thank the team at CISS, whole heartedly, for their perseverance and determination on our behalf. With the world on hold, for now, cynicism is bound to creep in. But in the case of our class I can safely say; you can keep us two metres apart, but you can't stop us! Take that, new normal.

Vartika Khanna, Megan Van den Bosch, Kier Skeffington

UPDATES FROM THE CISS ALUMNI

Committee Election

In August 2020 the CISS Alumni Association held an AGM. On this occasion they held a vote on their Constitution and elected the first Alumni committee. Committee members are listed on the Alumni website in the "[About us](#)" section.

Webinar Series 2020

This recent live-streamed series featured former scholars talking about their experiences since completing the scholarship, and all three webinars are available now on the [CISS Alumni Youtube channel](#). Click the thumbnails below to watch!



Some of the organisers and featured speakers of the webinars shared their thoughts:

Alistair Paton, Glasgow Projects Coordinator



In September, the CISS Alumni held their first ever webinar series. The 3 webinars in the series looked at Education, Jobs, and Internships, respectively. The aim of the Alumni was to highlight the achievements of previous scholars and inspire a new generation of Chinese learners by showing them where the Chinese language can take them. The vast range of experiences and topics discussed was the real success of the series,

providing something for everyone. We once again thank our excellent speakers who came along and shared these amazing insights.

All the webinars were well attended by both Alumni members and secondary school children from CISS hub schools as well as members of the public. The "2020 Webinar Series" is now available to view on the [CISS Alumni YouTube Channel](#) for everyone to enjoy.

Erin Duffy, Speaker

The CISS Alumni Webinar Series was a wonderful occasion for former Alumni and students of Chinese to learn about the opportunities available to us in Scotland. I learned a lot at the webinars on Education and Jobs, and in particular, as someone in their final year of University, it was interesting to hear from scholars about what they had done with their Chinese skills after graduating from university. I spoke at the Webinar on summer jobs and Internships, and I really enjoyed sharing my experiences with other students, hoping that - as I had felt at the Jobs webinar - that they would feel inspired by the wide range of opportunities available to us.



As I mentioned during the Q&A, I had already benefited from the support and advice of other scholars like Natalie Hotchkiss, who helped me prepare for my interview and eventual move to Beijing to work with the FCO in 2017. For me the webinar series was an excellent way to showcase the ways in which we, as students of Chinese in Scotland, can create a community of like-minded individuals that share opportunities and experiences with one other.

Leah Duncan-Karrim, Speaker & Edinburgh Projects Coordinator



Speaking at the recent CISS seminars in recent weeks was a privilege. I'm passionate about working to motivate and inspire the next generations of scholars to pursue Chinese education and further opportunities on their return from the scholarship. I hope that these seminars were useful for both existing and future scholars and look forward to seeing you all succeed in your future language pursuits. There's so much to get involved with that it would be a shame to miss out!

Q&A with a Chinese university graduate

Grace Paterson, CISS Scholar 2015-2016

Grace, a previous CISS Scholar, stayed on in China following the Scholarship and recently graduated from a Chinese university. Here, she answers some of our questions about her journey with China and Chinese.

When and why did you start to learn Mandarin?

I first picked up Mandarin in my last year of high school, I was lucky enough to receive a place on the China Summer Bridge Camp to Tianjin in 2014 which was my first ever Chinese experience. During my short time in China at the Summer Bridge Camp I learned a lot of new things and became increasingly interested in this new culture and language. As soon as I returned to Scotland that summer I began studying Mandarin in my study periods with the Chinese Exchange Teachers and becoming as involved as possible with CISS and its activities in Scotland.

Why did you apply for the CISS Scholarship?

I had heard a little about the CISS Scholarship while in Tianjin during the Summer Bridge Camp and immediately knew that it was something I was definitely interested in. I've always wanted to have the opportunity to understand and appreciate other countries and cultures in a more immersive way than just traveling and when I learned of the opportunity to live and study in China, which was a place I was already



very interested in, I was certain it was something I wanted to do. While creating an application for the CISS Scholarship I gained a lot of valuable experience and I still feel incredibly lucky to have been able to receive it.

What made you decide to do your degree in China rather than Scotland?

During my year studying Mandarin on the CISS Scholarship I found myself experiencing something new and exciting every day and when my time in China was beginning to come to an end I knew I absolutely wasn't ready to leave yet. I felt very happy and comfortable in

Tianjin and wanted to continue to have new experiences every day, whilst learning more about the culture and language of China. Although it was very daunting to make the decision to continue to live somewhere so far from home, I have always been certain that leaving China so quickly is definitely something I would've regretted forever.

Where did you go to university in China and what did you study?

I spent the 4 years of my undergraduate degree at Nankai University, which is a public research university in Tianjin. I spent my first two years studying a bachelors in Japanese language before changing in 2018 to study Chinese language and culture for my third and fourth years, graduating in July of this year with a 1:2 following my dissertation written in the field of foreign language study and linguistics.

How did the CISS Scholarship influence your decision to stay in China?

My time spent studying with the CISS Scholarship remains one of the highlights of my time in China to this day. The opportunity to be able to wholly immerse myself in another culture and meet so many incredible people along the way was something I would never have believed I would have. If not for my wonderful experiences during that time I cannot say for certain if I would still be in China to this day enjoying what I do so much. Not only was I given the chance to wholeheartedly learn and adapt to something new and exciting, I was also

able to meet and become friends with different people from all over the world. The CISS scholarship taught me to be strong and independent and gave me the opportunity to become a more international person. Without this opportunity I can guarantee my life, and myself, would be very different today.

What have been the best parts of your university experience?

It is near impossible to sum up my university experience in China to just a few words because it has been so unique. One of the definite highlights, however, has been the people I've met during my time studying. The campus at Nankai is huge and I'm often still surprised by how many students live and study there. It was always a great experience to meet new people and get to know them. There was also a huge selection of optional courses and clubs on campus which provided great opportunities to pick up new hobbies or learn something different. I really enjoyed my social life during my time at university due to how easy it is to eat out or find somewhere to study with friends, I found myself doing something different after classes almost every day.

What have been the biggest challenges you have faced while studying in China?

Despite my love of my life in China, that's not to say it's been plain sailing the whole time. I found myself struggling to fit in sometimes during my early years in Tianjin, because of



the sometimes large cultural difference between Scotland and China I did sometimes find myself struggling to adapt. However as I've come to have a greater understanding of Chinese habits and culture I am now able to adopt many aspects of Chinese culture as my own without necessarily giving up my own habits and culture. What is most important to me is being able to understand and respect the differences in culture even if sometimes it's something I'm unable to do myself.

What does a day in the life of a student at Nankai University look like?

For most of my time at Nankai I had a pretty full timetable of classes and optional courses, which meant that I had a lot of busy days. Classes run Monday to Friday with the earliest classes at 8:30 and the last classes finishing at around 4:30. After morning classes my classmate and I would always eat lunch together, and because Nankai's large campus has so

many canteens and restaurants, we would normally eat something different every day. After classes we would still have most of the day to study at a nearby café, go shopping, exercise or find somewhere nice to eat before doing some studying or homework in the evenings. There were no weekend classes so we would often have big gatherings at restaurants or bars with our classmates, friends or any new people we had met recently. During my time at Nankai there wasn't much time spent resting but I had much more fun working and hanging out with friends and classmates anyway!

What do you think are the biggest differences between Chinese and Scottish university life?

University in China runs to a stricter timetable than in Scotland, up until fourth year students have classes most days, which means that students spend more time on campus studying but the workload is less than that in Scotland. There's also

more importance put on classes focused on topics outside of your degree subject such as Computing and PE classes during first and second year, however I really enjoyed the chance to study many different subjects as well as being able to keep active.

Have you been involved in the CISS Alumni group since your scholarship year? In what way?

The CISS Alumni group has been a really great way for me to stay connected to old friends and meet new scholars during these few years in China. Due to the fact that I have lived in Tianjin since originally coming here during the 2015/16 CISS Scholarship I have only been able to attend a limited number of events in Scotland such as the annual Scholars meeting in August or the Chinese New Year Burns Supper celebration in winter. However, the alumni group has been a great way to get to know different scholars and since I live in Tianjin full time it has been an invaluable network for helping each other while in China.

When you were first awarded the scholarship would you ever have imagined it would lead you to where you are now?

The life I live now is something is still struggle to get my own head around sometimes. When I was first awarded the CISS Scholarship my main plan was to absolutely make the most of the opportunity while I had it and that's the attitude I've tried to take throughout my time here. My life in China is

something I try to see as an adventure and not something I take for granted. Life here can have an unpredictable nature compared to Scotland and so I try to grab every opportunity I'm given and embrace it. The things I've done and accomplished in China until now are all things I never would've believed if I'd been told where my life would go if I had been told back in 2015.

Do you think the scholarship and your subsequent undergraduate degree in China opened up new opportunities or paths for you that you would not otherwise have predicted for yourself?

Without the amazing opportunity I was given in the CISS scholarship I don't think I would've been able to come nearly as far as I have until now. During my last year of university I focused so much time into working on my dissertation that when graduation came around I found myself at a loss for what I wanted to do next but I knew I still wasn't ready to leave China just yet. As I have a degree now I've been able to get a work visa in an international school here in Tianjin to gain some invaluable work experience. While researching jobs I have also become aware of all the amazing and greatly varying work opportunities available to me in the future on account of my background and Mandarin ability. I don't think I ever once believed I'd be able to have so many learning and working opportunities available to me when I was younger.

What advice would you give someone who is studying Chinese in school and might be interested in following a similar path to you?

Firstly I would absolutely recommend looking into the CISS scholarship. Also to link up with your local Confucius Institute as there are many great chances to learn more about China and Chinese culture through various events. For anybody considering going to China or looking for further education in China my advice would be to just go for it. The experience I have gained here is invaluable and it has been one of the best experiences of my life. Keep up your studies and grab any opportunities you can.

What are your plans for the future? Do you think you'll keep living in China?

Since graduating I've started teaching in an international school here in Tianjin to gain some work experience and have some time to think about my future plans, but for the moment I can say I still don't feel ready to leave China. I have no plans set in stone at present but I know that no matter what I do in the future that China and Mandarin will definitely be a part of it. I would love to be able to help further connections between China and Scotland in the future and give back to all those that have given me such great opportunities up until now.

If you could give one key piece of advice to someone considering studying in China what would it be?

I think the most important thing to do when considering pursuing opportunities in China is to keep an open mind and not to give yourself limitations. Many different opportunities will be available while living here and my best piece of advice is to grab every single one, no matter how daunting it may seem at the time. China is definitely different from Scotland but living and studying here has been the best experience of my life and I would highly recommend to all interested to give it a shot and make your own Chinese experience because it will not be something you will regret.

DISCOVERING CHINA PROJECT

What is it?

Discovering China is an innovative new project run in partnership with e-Sgól. Online lessons are delivered by a GTCS teacher of Mandarin and live streamed into the classroom at both primary and secondary level. Materials are available for pupils to explore and use to develop all four skills – reading, writing, listening and talking. This project gives learners in our hubs the chance to be accredited by SQA for National 4 or National 5 Mandarin (simplified). The courses also encourage candidates to explore aspects of Chinese culture as well as providing a solid linguistic foundation for learning the world’s most spoken language.

Teacher's Perspective

Xiaoyan Zhou, CISS GTCS registered teacher of Mandarin



Being part of the team delivering the “Discovering China” program has allowed me to teach in both an exciting and challenging environment. As this has been the first edition of this bespoke online program, I felt greatly excited and have gained numerous unforgettable and valuable experiences in teaching.

From the beginning, I realized that it was challenging to design a

comprehensive and attractive program that could provide the pupils with the most interesting and valuable knowledge of Chinese language and culture. In particular, the program had to be delivered in a short time to pupils ranging in levels of education (from primary to secondary school.) I worked tirelessly with my colleagues to select suitable content related not only to learning languages but culture too.

During the teaching process, I have had many unforgettable moments; one of which was when I started to teach, I was kicked offline and had to log on again due to technical problems. The biggest challenge is that I am speaking only to a monitor screen rather than the pupils themselves. Therefore, there are no true in-person interactions between

myself and the pupils. Thus I was unable to know to what extent the pupils had learnt and memorized the content, in particular how they pronounced certain characters. However, these potential issues have been gradually solved within the progress of teaching. The feedback received from learners related to online teaching activities has been positive.

Now the program is still ongoing, and I am so proud of the progress that pupils from different schools have made. It has benefited from the substantial amount of work and effort put into it by the whole team, led by Fhiona Mackay. Meanwhile, I am very confident and keen to continue to improve the program, and to give more and more pupils across the country greater opportunities to learn the Chinese language, and be able to experience Chinese culture through our online teaching.

Parental Perspective

Dr Ingeborg Birnie

When the schools in Scotland closed for face-to-face teaching on the 20th of March, we, like many parents across the country, were wondering how we could continue to support home learning for our son, then aged 9. As our son is very interested in other cultures and languages we signed him up for the Discovering China course, organised by SCILT. One of the things that attracted us was the fact that it would allow him some real-time interaction with a teacher, as well as meet other children from across Scotland.

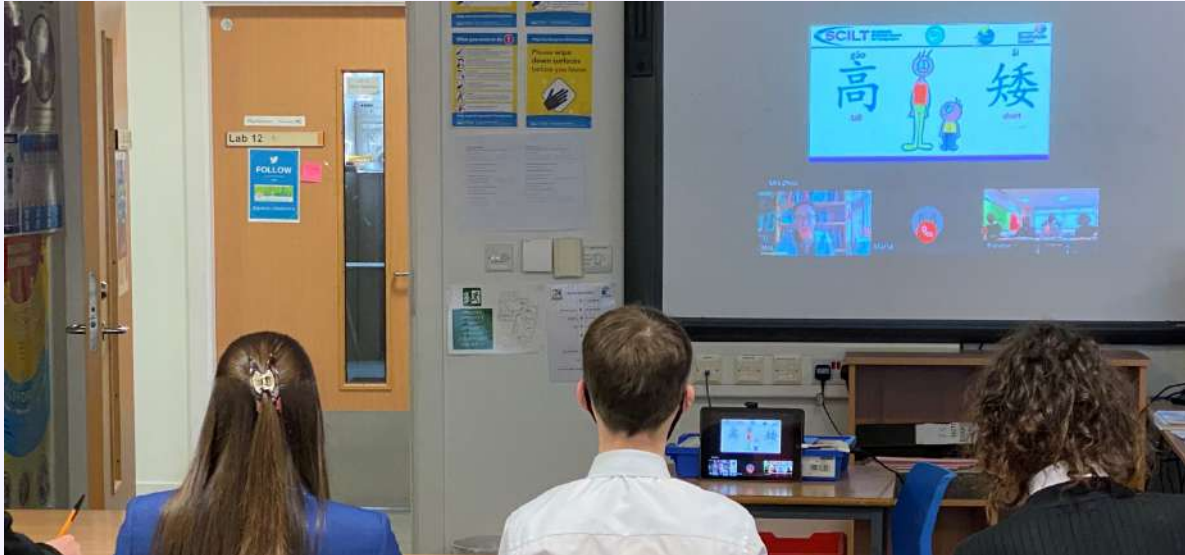
No need to say that our son really enjoyed the course; there was a great mixture of language and culture (did you know that China resembles the shape of a rooster? And that the Mandarin word for 100 sounds like “eBay”?) – and it was great to see him interact with both the teachers, who were very enthusiastic, and the other students in the class through the chat box – even though they did not previously know each other.

For us as parents it was great to see our son so actively involved in his learning and fully engaged with the sessions. An added bonus were the online materials to support the different sessions which we used in our home learning sessions. Thanks to everyone involved!



School's Perspective

Andy Creamer, Acting Head Teacher, Grove Academy, Dundee



8 senior pupils from Grove Academy are currently taking an online National 4 Mandarin course. This is delivered via Vscene and had been organised via CISS and SCILT. The school explored options with SCILT for Mandarin following the establishment of partnerships between Grove Academy and 2 schools in China facilitated by IPERC (www.iperc.org). These partnerships focused initially on STEM based activities and the school views Mandarin as essential to further collaboration with our partner schools and has longer term plans to incorporate Mandarin in the full curriculum. This will also form part of our wider DYW developments. The remote delivery has enabled the school to offer this option which otherwise would not be available to pupils.

There were some initial challenges to ensure full access to the platform at a Local Authority level but we managed during this period to deploy a temporary work around until corporate IT fully enabled access to schools networks. Pupils are taught by a registered Mandarin teacher with live lessons 3 days per week for 50 minutes and additional support delivered through Microsoft Teams. The use of Vscene means pupils can, if required access the lessons via any browser or also a dedicated Vscene app. This has been particularly relevant recently as some pupils have had to self isolate and have thus been able to fully access the lessons at home. In addition, all lessons are recorded and pupils can also access these recordings. The lessons are very interactive, Microsoft teams enabled a channel for individual support and feedback and this has helped foster engagement of pupils who are consequently making very good progress.

Pupil feedback has been very positive with high levels of motivation. Pupils have found the online approach enjoyable and recognise that this is an opportunity they would not normally have available. In particular pupils have found the delivery by a GTC registered teacher very helpful and receive detailed and quick feedback. In addition pupils appreciate the additional input on culture and the stories behind characters. Following pupil evaluations we are seeking to add the Vscene app to our school based iPads.

As a result of this initial pilot and positive feedback with these senior pupils we have now formed an S3 Mandarin group who will be taking a 10 week program supported by a Virtual Exchange Teacher (VET). In addition, we have created an interdisciplinary International Program as part of our Electives for senior pupils. This will also be supported by VETs to include a language input with the eventual aspiration to form the basis of exchange programs and summer school camps with our partner schools and IPERC.



CISS STAFF UPDATES

Goodbyes...

CISS and SCILT were very sad to say goodbye to valued staff members this year. After 10 very successful years with CISS, Depute Director Fan Lin has taken up a new post working with the principal of the University of Strathclyde to develop the University's links with China. Fan has been instrumental to the success of CISS and will be sorely missed by all. We wish her the very best and know she'll make a valuable impact in her new role.



We also said goodbye to our CISS volunteer teacher Qiqi, who decided to stay in China following her first year with us, due to the global situation. It was not an easy decision for her and her bubbly personality and enthusiasm will be missed. Qiqi taught Mandarin to staff and students at the University of Strathclyde, supported CISS events and more.

We also said goodbye to our two wonderful Professional Development Officers, Meryl James and Robert Burgess earlier this year. Meryl has been with CISS since 2012 and has worked tirelessly to support Mandarin learning and teaching across hubs in Scotland including supporting



our CETs and leading the Teacher Immersion trip to China. Robert has a background in community development and brought his expertise to the development of the Specialist Hubs and supported the wider hub network.

We'd like to thank Fan, Qiqi, Robert and Meryl for their hard work and contribution to CISS, and for being fantastic colleagues. No doubt you've all benefitted from their hard work and support in some way or another.

...And Welcomes!

As we say goodbye to four colleagues we also welcome new ones.

Karen Liddle and Susan Lawson joined CISS this term as our new Professional Development Officers.



Susan is an experienced primary teacher who has worked closely with CISS over the years, developing the Stirling Primary Confucius Classroom Hub. Karen joins us from Angus where she has a range of experience, teaching secondary Modern Languages, developing the Angus Confucius Classroom Hub and supporting CETs.



Karen and Susan have already made such an impact in the short time they've been with us and we're excited for what they'll bring to CISS in the future.

With Fan Lin's departure CISS and SCILT underwent a restructure and we are excited to welcome a new General Manager for CISS, Wendy Green, from January. Wendy has previously worked at General Manager at the Confucius Institute for Scotland at the University of Edinburgh, so brings a wealth of experience to the new role.



We would also like to congratulate SCILT PDO Lisa Hanna who has recently been appointed as Depute Director for both CISS and SCILT.

We're looking forward to working with Wendy and Lisa to deliver exciting projects and support to our hubs across Scotland.

**Confucius Institute
for Scotland's Schools, 2020**
www.strath.ac.uk/ciss

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